

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-13 remain active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Before addressing the issues raised in the Action, it is useful to review applicants' contribution to this art. An important aspect of the present invention is that the surrounding edge portion of a blank that is being produced is not brought into contact with the mold during its press-molding operation. Another way of describing this is that the surrounding edge portion of the blank is not defined and therefore the surrounding edge portion forms a free surface. This free surface does not include marks that may be present on the molding surface so that processing marks existing on the molding surface are not transferred. Also, when a powdery mold release agent is used to assist in molding, the free surface is a surface that is not pressed during a molding operation, so that if a molding powder is used as a release agent, the free surface is free from roughening that may be caused by the mold release agent.

With the above information in mind, independent claims 1-4 have been amended to specify that the surrounding edge portion has a free surface which is consistent with the description of the invention at page 10, paragraph [0021]. The amendments made to claims 1-4 do not introduce added subject matter for the reason just explained.

The focus of the Official Action is three prior art-based rejections directed to three different groupings of claims. In the first, claims 1-3 and 6-10 are rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Murakami JP 10-236831. The document cited is in Japanese so the examiner is using, for convenience, U.S. patent 6,442,975 also to Murakami et al. For the purposes of this response only, counsel is responding to the examiner's citation of this document, however it is noted that the '975 patent issued from an application that was a continuation-in-part of an earlier application and thus the content of the '975 patent may or may not be the same as that of the Japanese reference cited.

Claims 3-5 were rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Suzuki JP 10-194760 while remaining claims 11-13 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over the Murakami Japanese document JP 10-236831. These rejections are all respectfully traversed as neither of the documents cited and relied upon discloses or suggests the subject matter of the claims as above amended.

In the outstanding Official Action, page 2, paragraph 1, lines 6 to 8, the examiner states that "as shown in figure 10 the circumferential edge of glass blank 44 does not touch the mold dies 17 and 14" with regard to Murakami JP 10-236831 (US 6,442,975). While it is true that the circumferential edge of glass blank 44 does not touch the mold dies 17 and 14, it *does* touch the cylindrical die 36. That is, the circumferential edge of glass blank 44 is defined by the cylindrical die 36 and does not have a free surface.

In the Official Action, page 3, third paragraph, the examiner also argues that "as shown in figure 5 the circumferential edge of glass blank 12 does not touch the mold sides 21 and 31" with regard to Suzuki JP-10-194760. However, the glass circumferential edge of glass blank 12 *touches* sleeves 36. That is, the circumferential edge of glass blank 12 is defined by the sleeves 36 and does not have a free surface.

In contrast to both Murakami and Suzuki, the molding of a glass of the present invention is conducted in a manner in which the surrounding edge portion has a free surface, so that the present invention accomplishes the function and effects described in paragraph [0021] of applicants' description, i.e. (1) no processing marks existing in the molding surface are transferred and (2) the free surface is free of roughening caused by the mold release agent.

The present invention is therefore different from the cited inventions in constitution, function and effect, so that it is clear that the present invention is both novel and unobvious over the cited references.

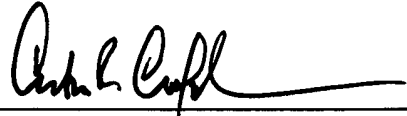
For the above reasons it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application define inventive subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance are solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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